

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-78 (Cancelled).

79. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a moulding unit having a punch and a cavity mould movable along a path between an open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other to receive a dose of plastics therebetween, and a closed position in which said punch and said cavity mould are aligned and interact to form an item by pressing said dose, said punch being kept at a height which is not greater than the height of said cavity mould along said path, the apparatus further comprising a supporting arrangement for supporting said dose, said supporting arrangement extending externally of said cavity mould for supporting said dose between said punch and said cavity mould in said open position.

80. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said punch is placed under said cavity mould.

81. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said punch and said cavity mould are placed on a common horizontal plane.

82. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said cavity mould is movable between said closed position and said open position.

83. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said punch is movable between said closed position and said open position.

84. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said moulding unit is mounted on a rotating carousel.

85. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement is driven by a cam arrangement.

86. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 84, wherein said supporting arrangement is driven by a cam arrangement.

87. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 85, wherein said cam arrangement is fixed to said punch.

88. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 85, wherein said cam arrangement is fixed to said cavity mould.

89. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 86, wherein said cam arrangement is fixed to said carousel.

90. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises a pair of rods connected to a respective pair of levers hinged at a base

body, each lever of said pair of levers being connected to the other lever of said pair of levers by a connection rod.

91. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement can be oscillated by a gear device.

92. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises a supporting member which is movable between a dose-receiving configuration in which said supporting member is so arranged as to retain said dose and a dose-delivering configuration in which said supporting member is so arranged as to deliver said dose to said moulding unit.

93. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 85, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises a supporting member which is movable between a dose-receiving configuration in which said supporting member is so arranged as to retain said dose and a dose-delivering configuration in which said supporting member is so arranged as to deliver said dose to said moulding unit.

94. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said cam arrangement has a first portion for driving said supporting member and a further supporting member in said dose-receiving configuration and a second portion for driving said supporting member and said further supporting member in a dose-pinching configuration in which said dose

is pinched between said supporting member and said further supporting member, said second portion being adjacent to said first portion.

95. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said supporting member can be oscillated parallelly to an axis along which said punch and said cavity mould are movable.

96. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said supporting member is made from porous material.

97. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said supporting member comprises a tubular supporting member having holes through which a fluid can be injected toward said dose.

98. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said supporting member is made from thermally substantially non-conductive material.

99. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according claim 93, wherein said supporting member is substantially L-shaped.

100. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 93, wherein said supporting member is coated by a substantially non stick material.

101. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement is mounted on said punch.

102. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement is mounted on said cavity mould.

103. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein said supporting arrangement is actuated along said path independently of said cavity mould and/or said punch.

104. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 86, wherein said supporting arrangement is mounted on said carousel.

105. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, and further comprising a dose-delivering mouth of an extruder interposed between said punch and said cavity mould in said open position.

106. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 105, wherein a severing arrangement co-operates with said dose-delivering mouth (so as to sever said dose from said extruder.

107. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 106, wherein said severing arrangement is mounted on said moulding unit.

108. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 106, wherein said severing arrangement is rotatable around a respective axis.

109. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 108, wherein said severing arrangement is driven by an independent motor unit.

110. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 103, and further comprising a dose-delivering mouth of an extruder interposed between said punch and said cavity mould in said open position.

111. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 110, wherein said severing arrangement is provided with a blade connected to said supporting member.

112. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according claim 106, wherein said severing arrangement is provided with a knife mounted on said punch or on said cavity mould.

113. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 79, wherein in said open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other a plurality of doses of plastics is placed between said punch and said cavity mould, so as to interact when said punch and said cavity mould are brought in said closed position.

114.-126. (Cancelled).

127. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a moulding unit having a punch and a cavity mould movable along an axis between an open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other to receive a dose of plastics therebetween, and a closed position in which said punch and said cavity mould interact to form an item by pressing said dose, a supporting arrangement for supporting said dose between said punch and said cavity mould, said supporting arrangement comprising a supporting member of porous material.

128. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a moulding unit having a punch and a cavity mould movable along an axis between an open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other to receive a dose of plastics therebetween, and a closed position in which said punch and said cavity mould interact to form an item by pressing said dose, a supporting arrangement for supporting said dose between said punch and said cavity mould, said supporting arrangement comprising a tubular supporting member having holes through which air can be injected toward said dose.

129. (Cancelled).

130. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a moulding unit having a punch and a cavity mould movable between an open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other to receive a dose of plastics therebetween, and a closed position in which said punch and said cavity mould interact to form an item by pressing

said dose, a dose-delivering mouth of an extruder being interposed between said punch and said cavity mould in said open position.

131. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 130, wherein a severing arrangement co-operates with said dose-delivering mouth so as to sever said dose from said extruder.

132. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 131, wherein said severing arrangement is mounted on said moulding unit.

133. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 131, wherein said severing arrangement is rotatable around a respective axis.

134. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 133, wherein said severing arrangement is driven by an independent motor unit.

135. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 131, wherein said severing arrangement is provided with a blade connected to a supporting member of a supporting arrangement for supporting said dose between said punch and said cavity mould.

136. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 131, wherein said severing arrangement is provided with a knife mounted on said punch or on said cavity mould.

137. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a moulding unit having a punch and a cavity mould movable between an open position in which said punch and said cavity mould are distanced apart from each other and receive a plurality of doses of plastics therebetween, and a closed position in which said punch and said cavity mould interact to form an item by pressing said plurality of doses.

138.-143. (Cancelled).

144. (Previously Presented) Apparatus, comprising a pair of rods for supporting a dose of plastics between a punch and a cavity mould, said pair of rods being actuatable by a cam arrangement having a first portion for driving said rods in a dose-receiving position in which said dose is received above said rods and a second portion for driving said rods in a dose-pinching position in which said dose is pinched between said rods, said second portion being adjacent to said first portion.

145. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 144, wherein said first portion and said second portion are arranged in sequence along a direction, said punch and/or said cavity mould being movable along said direction to open or close said moulding unit.

146. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 144, wherein said cam arrangement comprises a third portion for driving said pair of rods in a dose-delivering position in which said dose is delivered between said punch and said cavity mould.

147. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 146, wherein said first portion, said second portion and said third portion are arranged in sequence along said direction.

148. (Withdrawn) A mould compression item comprising a body formed from a plurality of plastic materials having different properties and/or appearance from one another.

149. (Withdrawn) An item according to claim 148, wherein said plurality of plastic materials comprises first plastic material and second plastic material.

150. (Withdrawn) An item according to claim 149, wherein said first and second plastic materials define adjacent portions of a container closure.

151. (Withdrawn) An item according to claim 150, wherein said adjacent portions are arranged one inside another in said container closure.

152. (Withdrawn) An item according to claim 150, wherein said adjacent portions are arranged side by side in said container closure.

153. (Withdrawn) An item according to claim 152, wherein a hinge is obtained in one of said adjacent portions.

154. (Withdrawn) Method, comprising delivering a plurality of doses of plastics to a moulding unit and pressing together said plurality of doses between a punch and a cavity mould.

155. (Withdrawn) Method for compression moulding of plastics items, comprising forming a dose of plastic material in a moulding unit by bringing together a punch and a cavity mould, wherein before said bringing together, said dose is propelled towards either said punch, or said cavity mould.

156. (Withdrawn) Method for compression moulding of plastics items, comprising forming a dose of plastics in a moulding unit by bringing together a punch and a cavity mould, and further comprising, before said bringing together, resting said dose on a pair of rods, moving said rods close to one another so as to pinch said dose, and delivering said dose from said rods to said moulding unit, wherein between said resting and said moving said dose remains in contact with said rods.

157. (New) Apparatus according to claim 137, comprising a supporting arrangement for supporting said plurality of doses between said punch and said cavity mould in said open position.

158. (New) Apparatus according to claim 157, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises a pair of rods for supporting said plurality of doses.

159. (New) Apparatus according to claim 158, wherein each of said pair of rods is provided with two adjacent curved portions for receiving said plurality of doses therebetween.

160. (New) Apparatus according to claim 158, wherein each of said pair of rods is provided with two supporting plates protruding towards corresponding supporting plates fixed to the other rod.

161. (New) Apparatus according to claim 157, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises a supporting member made of a porous material or with holes oriented towards said doses to inject a fluid thereagainst.

162. (New) Apparatus according to claim 157, wherein said supporting arrangement comprises two pairs of rods which can be opened to release said doses.